



**Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Southern District of Texas**

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**HOUSTON JURY CONVICTS HARLINGEN MAN OF TRAFFICKING IN COCAINE**

HOUSTON, TX – Last evening, a jury found Jose Luis Zavala, 40, of Harlingen, Texas, guilty of all four counts filed against him for his part in a drug trafficking group that operated in the United States from late September 2003 through July 2005. The jury returned its verdicts after three days of trial testimony and approximately four hours of deliberations.

During the three-day trial, which began on Monday, April 17, 2006, the jury learned that more than 60 kilograms of cocaine had been seized during the course of the investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, which ultimately lead to the indictment and arrest of Zavala. A ledger seized by investigating agents established Zavala's involvement in a conspiracy to distribute hundreds of kilograms more of the cocaine dating back to September 2003. Furthermore, on July 16, 2005, Zavala was involved in the distribution of 24 kilograms of cocaine

Zavala has been in federal custody, without bond, since his arrest, and will remain in federal custody until his sentencing. United States District Judge Ewing Werlein, Jr., who presided over the trial of the case, has scheduled a sentencing hearing for August 4, 2006, at 10:45 a.m. Each of the four counts of conviction – two counts of conspiracy, and two counts of possession with intent to distribute cocaine -- carry a mandatory minimum sentence of ten (10) years and a maximum of life in federal prison, and a \$4 million fine.

The case was investigated by special agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Peter Mason and Stuart Burns.

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